

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry film days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. It is more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Not divisive, partisan films meant to sway an election. That is not a good use of the public airwaves and is downright shameful. Sinclair clearly has no sense of decency when it comes to stewardship of our public airwaves.

The anti-Kerry film Sinclair is forcing its stations to air does not belong free on broadcast television. It does not matter that Sinclair extended an invitation to Senator Kerry to appear on a post-film panel. This does not constitute equal time. Equal time would also be showing a film critical of the Bush Administration with President Bush invited to rebutte its arguments.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.